

CITY OF MIAMI BEACH
Office of the City Manager
Letter to Commission No. 012-2004



To: Mayor David Dermer and
Members of the City Commission

Date: January 14, 2004

From: Jorge M. Gonzalez
City Manager

A handwritten signature of Jorge M. Gonzalez.

Subject: WEEKLY UPDATE

The purpose of this LTC is to provide the Mayor and Commission with an update describing some of the areas the administration focused on during the week of January 5, 2004:

Neighborhood Leadership Academy – The fourth Neighborhood Leadership Academy class completed their course on December 15, 2003. The group had been meeting since September 22 and spent 12 weeks together hearing from a total of 12 City Departments in an effort to become more knowledgeable members of our diverse community. The graduation ceremony has been scheduled for the February 4, 2004 City Commission meeting.

On-line Permitting – I met with staff from the Building and IT Departments to continue our discussion regarding exploring alternative methods to expedite implementation of software to enable online permitting for the City's development functions. The City is in the process of purchasing the software called "Velocity Hall" which would enable the Building Department to provide online permitting intended for issuance of trade permits (Plumbing, Electrical and Mechanical) that have master permits. The IT Department is in the process of procuring and implementing this program with a target launch date of April 1, 2004.

South Pointe – I attended a meeting on January 6 with several South Pointe area residents regarding the possible formation of a neighborhood association which will work to protect the residential character of the area. Residents' concerns include the continuing growth of commercial and entertainment businesses in South Pointe which result in continued noise, traffic, parking, sanitation, crime and general quality of life problems. The residents proposed further zoning amendments. Commissioner Gross attended a portion of the meeting. The Administration is supportive of the residents' concerns and suggested an association be formed with various committees for issues such as parking, zoning, quality of life, etc.

Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) – On January 6, representatives from the Administration presented to the BAC a summary of the discussion held at the last Executive Session regarding negotiations with the Unions. Union presidents and representatives were invited and given the opportunity to hear the presentation. The BAC recommended that whatever course of action is taken, that the City remain fiscally responsible and sound with the ongoing negotiations.

Portofino Mediation – Staff from the Legal Department and Administration met with the Honorable Judge Edward Davis on January 7 regarding the Portofino mediation. An update regarding this item will be provided to each of you at the Executive Session scheduled for January 14, 2004.

Nightlife Industry Task Force (NITE) – Staff and I met with a subcommittee of the NITE on January 7 to discuss and explore several options regarding litter. Among the items discussed were expanding the voluntary compliance of litter control for businesses in the entertainment district, the City undertaking a campaign to get the word out about litter control, and expanding enforcement of the litter ordinance. The Administration will continue to explore these possibilities to make a final recommendation.

Employee Awards and Recognition Celebration - On January 7, the City held its annual Employee Awards and Recognition Celebration at the Jackie Gleason Theater of the Performing Arts. Over 200 employees and their guests were in attendance to salute and recognize employees who had received awards in several areas, including Customer Service Excellence Awards, Employee of the Month "At Your Service Awards", and the City Awards presented by the Personnel Board. Employees who are celebrating an anniversary this year also received their 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30 year service pins. An employee talent show was also part of the program.

City Commission Workshop – Was held on January 8 to update the City Commission on issues relating to the state of cultural affairs on Miami Beach and the strategic planning efforts the Administration is undertaking in order to further elevate the City's cultural status and initiatives.

Organizational Development – As part of the City's on-going leadership and organizational development efforts, a one day workshop on leadership, diversity and customer service was held on January 9. This workshop was facilitated by nationally recognized experts in leadership and diversity from Franklin Covey, a well-known national organization whose mission is to foster leadership development. Topics covered included: developing professional and personal leadership, principles of customer service and why they are important, building high performance teams, principles of diversity and why they are important, valuing the differences in others, communication skills, and general leadership topics.

Julia Tuttle Lighting Project – On January 9, staff and I met with a representative from the Turchin Companies regarding conceptual designs for decorative lighting on the Julia Tuttle Causeway. The Turchin Companies will next meet with representatives from the Florida Department of Transportation to try to gain their support for the project.

Parking Department – As part of this department's ongoing leadership development, a training session was held for all employees at all levels of the department. These training sessions were conducted over the weekend and focused on providing outstanding customer service and sensitivity and diversity training.